GROWING TOGETHER
an mp100 zine

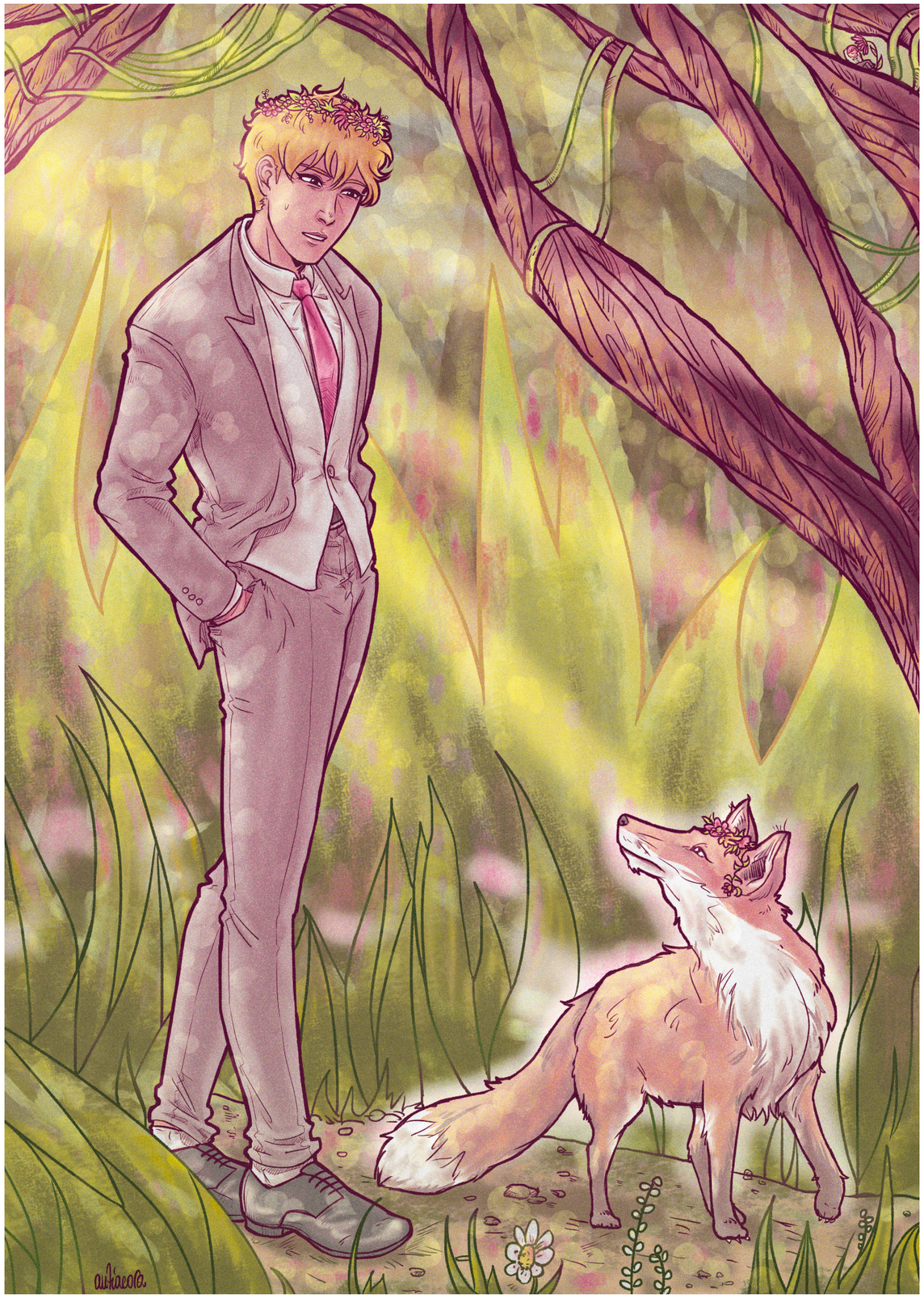
Hello!

We have a special little bonus feature in this zine! In every artwork, there is a hidden Minegishi for all you botanic enthusiasts! (Except on the last two artworks oops)

Have fun searching!

Minegishi by Lela

Sam; *Twitter - @Dammit_Freak, Instagram - @d4mmit_fre4k*



Autiocora; *Twitter - @autiocora, Tumblr - autiacoraart*

Frosti; *Twitter - @frostiflake, Instagram - @drawstios, Tumblr - frostios*

Boys Day Out

by Lyssa; *Tumblr - serendipitouslyss, Ao3 - SerendipitousLyss*

It's Teru who originally suggests that they all do something fun together before the warm season ends and it gets too cold to go out anymore. It's autumn, early enough in the season that the lingering warmth of summer can still be felt but late enough that the trees have already begun to change colors and shed their leaves. In a few months, the ground will be blanketed in snow, and the icy chill of the winter air will prove too much for outdoor activities.

Shigeo is agreeable enough to the idea. A waterfall hike is a little more physical than he's used to, but he's never one to turn away from a chance to improve his physical strength further, and Ritsu seems excited to do something different before they're thrown back into their structured school schedules again. Even Shou has decided to tag along, despite his tendency to be a little flaky about when and where he decides to hang around, and he happily chats up Ritsu as the four of them get off the train at the beginning of the trail. A modest information stand sits at the front of a building that appears to be a combination gift shop and cafe, and directly beside it sits the trail's entrance. Even from the bottom of the cliff, it's easy for them to see all the way to the very top. There's so much to see, in fact, that Shigeo finds his eyes constantly wandering as the four of them begin their ascent.

The waterfall is, first of all, huge--it towers far, far above their heads from the top of a rocky cliff too high up to see what's beyond it and crashes onto the rocks below with a cacophonous crash. The sound of it drowns out most conversation around the four of them as they stand at the base of the hiking trail and take a moment just to stare.

Everything here is green and vibrant and alive, from the moss growing on the banks of the river that flows from the base of the waterfall to the trees enshrouding the top of it and poking out from the side of the steep cliff face. Shigeo can feel the mist from the swiftly falling water hitting his face even from a

Solace; *Instagram - @poopgamer2002, Tumblr - soldez*

Boys Day Out

by Lyssa; *Tumblr - serendipitouslyss, Ao3 - SerendipitousLyss*

distance, and when he breathes in, the air is fresh and clean.

It's Shou who breaks the silence first. "Well, what are we waiting for?" he asks enthusiastically, and he's the one who takes the lead as they begin to explore this new environment.

They take a slow, meandering pace to start out, the waterfall disappearing behind the trees and fading into background noise as they enter the forest and begin the winding path that will take them to the lookout halfway up. Here, the trees are much taller than in the city, the tops of them stretching so far above their heads that Shigeo can't see through the myriad of branches that make up the forest's ceiling. They shift constantly as the breeze stirs them, the noise of it reminiscent of the sound Shigeo might hear when it rains late at night outside his bedroom window. Shou and Ritsu end up pulling ahead of him and Shou, but Teru lingers behind to keep pace with Shigeo.

"The air is so clean here," He remarks, climbing carefully over a stray tree root that pokes up through the floor of the trail. "It's a lot different from living in the city, that's for sure. You'd never be able to find trees like these in Seasoning."

Shigeo hums his agreement, watching as some early brown leaves fall occasionally from the trees overhead. They're still in the heat of summer, but Shigeo can see patches of brown and red peeking through the swathes of green trees all around him, sure signs of the coming autumn. They crunch softly under his hiking boots and dance along the mild summer breezes that lift them gently from their homes among the branches and send them spiralling down to earth with utmost care. In a few weeks' time, this entire forest will be covered in them, hiding the dirt paths that snake through the woods and falling from the sky like quiet rain. It'll be a sight to behold, Shigeo thinks contentedly.

Shinsei; *Twitter & Instagram - @pancakehandz, Tumblr - pancakehandz*

Boys Day Out

by Lyssa; *Tumblr - serendipitouslyss, Ao3 - SerendipitousLyss*

They catch up with Shou and Ritsu as they're reapproaching the river. The two boys have halted in front of the riverbank, and Shigeo can see that Ritsu has already stripped off his shoes and socks in order to wade into the river's shallows. Shou looks like he's following closer behind, and as he discards his shoes beside Ritsu's, he turns to wave them over.

"The water's shallow enough to wade in over here!" he calls.

Shigeo approaches the shore as Shou wades into the water after Ritsu, and deliberates for a moment whether or not he should follow suit. He hadn't brought a swimsuit, per se, but he'd be able to wade up to his knees as long as he didn't get his shorts wet. Glancing to the side, he sees Teru following Shou's lead, adding his own hiking boots to the pile of shoes growing on the bank, so Shigeo figures it won't hurt to play along.

The river water is crisp and cold when Shigeo steps into it, but in the mild heat of summer it feels more refreshing than not. Ahead of him, Ritsu and Shou are up to their knees in river water, looking eagerly down into the water for signs of fish or debris that may have survived the drop from the top of the waterfall. Because of the river's current, the bank drops off sharply a few feet in to accommodate a much deeper middle, and they perch themselves right on its edge, toes dangling off the edge as though to tempt fate.

As Shigeo catches up to the two of them, Shou looks up and meets his eyes. He flashes Shigeo a devious grin, the kind that Shigeo knows to mean that Shou is about to do something that will probably make Ritsu angry later, and then promptly turns back to Ritsu and pushes him into the deeper center of the river.

With a yelp of surprise, Ritsu pitches forward into the water to the sound of Shou's raucous laughter, limbs flailing as he fights to keep his balance. It appears to be no use, however, and he hits the surface of the water with a splash that even manages to reach Teru and Shigeo, a few paces back. Shou's doubled over in his mirth, clutching

Stack-o-Pancake; *Instagram - @stackopancake, Tumblr - Stack-O-Pancake*

Boys Day Out

by Lyssa; *Tumblr - serendipitouslyss, Ao3 - SerendipitousLyss*

his stomach as Ritsu resurfaces and fixes him with one of the most severe glares Shigeo's ever seen from his brother. "I'm sorry," Shou wheezes, though it's easy to see that he feels no remorse at all for the spontaneous prank, "it was just too perfect to pass up."

At Shigeo's side, Teru has his mouth covered, and he can see that his friend is trying his hardest not to laugh aloud as well. Shigeo has to fight a smile of his own; it's been a while since the four of them have been able to have fun together like this, without the fear of hostile takeover or the stress of school hanging over them. It's… nice, to spend time with them like this. "At least Shou's having fun," he comments.

No sooner has he said this, however, than does Ritsu reach out of the water with one hand and grab Shou by his wrist. With one quick yank, he drags Shou into the water alongside him, and both of them disappear for a few seconds before resurfacing in a chorus of laughter and splashing. Teru lets out a sigh of resignation, but there's a smile on his face. "Well, I had assumed this might come up at some point," he admits. "We might as well join them before we become the next victims."

Shigeo raises a hand to his mouth to stifle a giggle, then nods. "At least we'll be able to cool off," he offers, walking beside Teru as they leave the shallow bank and descend into the deep waters. Teru's quick to join in the splashing fight, his competitive side taking over until the whole group has devolved into a messy test of endurance to see who would be the first to give up. Shigeo hangs back, amused and content, and counts himself lucky to have so many good friends in his life that he can count on.

Ale; *Instagram - @opachos1, Tumblr - opachos*

It was a good idea to start our own garden, eh Mob?

without psychic powers this time..

Aren't they still pretty small th-

HA!

Im going to ignore that comment

LOOK, Mob! The biggest one we've found so far!

YOU KNOW, They say tomato flowers represent strength + believing in yourself!

hmm

Here! Give it to someone special to you

Someone.. Special?

Kageyama Kun!

oh?

T-T TERU SAN!!!

um

this is... the best one...

um So...

DID NOT THINK THIS THROUGH

The best one, huh...

Cartoon by Sai; *Instagram - @sainottheprogram, Tumblr - sainottheprogram*

Refugium

by Aeru; *Tumblr - grandmasterreigen, Ao3 - Aerugonian*

The day the garden appears is exactly one week after Teru's parents left for America.

He knows, realistically, that it was there before. Probably has been since before he was born, if the size of the trees is any indication.

But it's the first time he's noticed the tiny triangle of greenery wedged in the awkward intersection between two winding lines of buildings, nothing more than an afterthought stuck in an inconvenient space that couldn't be used for construction.

Teru stands on the sidewalk, hands clutching his schoolbag as misty rain drizzles down around him, and contemplates stopping. Just for a little while. Fog obscures the sidewalk, the few people out on the streets hurrying along to escape the dreariness. He should be getting back to his apartment.

But it's not like there will be anyone there waiting for him. There's no one left out there to miss him.

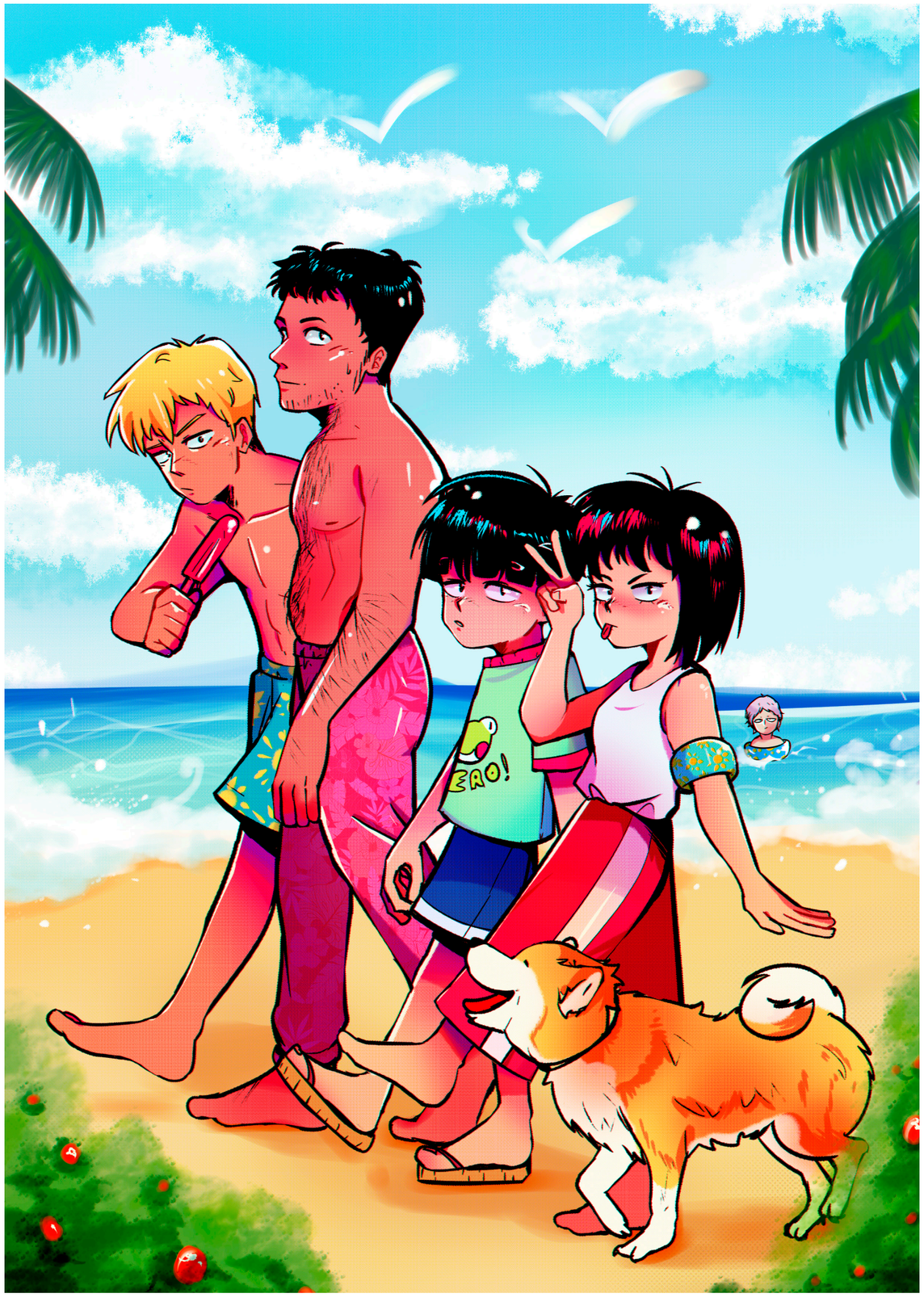
He steps off the cement walk onto the wet grass and stashes his bag under one of the bushes to keep it from getting even wetter than it already is, and slowly ambles in between the trees. He breathes in the sharp tang of wet soil and feels the heavy drops of water filtering through the leaves on his skin. He's no more than ten feet from where he started, yet the atmosphere seems entirely different, a calmness descending over him like a blanket.

Teru is cold and wet, hair plastered uncomfortably against his forehead. But here, surrounded by life, he can pretend he's not alone in the world.

--

Time passes.

Teru has a birthday, then two, then four.



Ale; *Instagram - @opachos1, Tumblr - opachos*

Refugium

by Aeru; *Tumblr - grandmasterreigen, Ao3 - Aerugonian*

Claw attempts another kidnapping. He manages to escape and patches his injuries with trembling hands.

Teru's parents don't come back. They say they will, but every time they're scheduled to visit, they call him full of apologies. I just started a new job, I could lose it if I left now. We're so sorry, the tickets were just too expensive this time of year. We'll come visit next year for sure. He tells them he doesn't mind, that he's doing fine on his own. It's only half a lie. He's learned how to do his own laundry and to air out his futon twice a month to prevent mold. He's taught himself how to cook a lot of foods so he gets a (mostly) varied diet. His grades are the best in his class and everyone wants to be friends with him. Some of them tell him how lucky he is, to not have parents breathing down his neck all the time.

He's doing great.
He doesn't go home until he absolutely has to. He spends his time in the little patch of trees he's all but claimed as his, up in the leaves where he's found a sturdy branch he can do his homework on. When the weather is bad he uses his psychic powers to create a barrier to block out the worst of it. No one is around to question where he spends his time when he's not out on another date he only goes on because he's bored. And he likes it that way - this is his haven, his space, and he doesn't want any of those people who only like him for his surface qualities to know about it.

The day Teru meets Shigeo, the day his world is turned upside down and he's left as exposed as a stripped wire, he hides in his tree and digs his fingernails into what's left of his hair. Pinprick stings lance across his scalp where he's broken the skin.

He has over a hundred people in his contacts and no one he can talk to.

Acorn; *Instagram - @pinecwone, Tumblr - acornsenpaii*

Refugium

by Aeru; *Tumblr - grandmasterreigen, Ao3 - Aerugonian*

Is he any better than those guys from Claw? He'd talked to one of them, the second time they tried to kidnap him. They go through their lives believing they're superior to those around them, that they should be in charge of the world because of their psychic powers. Teru had scoffed at them. But he's the same, isn't he?
He's just like the rest of them. Ordinary. Purposeless.
Alone.

--

Until one day, there's Shigeo.

Teru hadn't thought he'd ever meet that kid again, much less become friends with him. If anything, he would have expected Shigeo to hate him for what he did to him. Instead they bond over a rescue mission for Shigeo's brother, then over ice cream when Teru works up the nerve to suggest it, then over homework after Shigeo asks for help with math. He starts coming over to Teru's place sometimes when he doesn't have work, quiet but somehow transforming the silence of the apartment into one infinitely less oppressive.

He starts going to the little grove of trees less, though he still finds himself there on especially lonely days. He brings Shigeo there, once, after a long day at Spirits & Such.
"It's probably silly, but I really like it here," Teru says, laughing self-consciously. He glances around the tiny space and really looks at it, at the scant trees and scraggly bushes, and at the unreadable expression on Shigeo's face. Suddenly this doesn't seem like it was such a great idea.

This place isn't exactly impressive, now that he really looks at it. Regret drops like a lead ball in his stomach. This was a mistake - he shouldn't have brought his crush of all people here.

"We can leave," he starts to say,

Linktoo; *Twitter & Tumblr - @linktoo_doodles, Instagram - @linktoo.doodles*

Refugium

by Aeru; *Tumblr - grandmasterreigen, Ao3 - Aerugonian*

but he's interrupted before he can continue.

"It's so peaceful," Shigeo says, peering up into the leaves that stretch over them like a threadbare canopy. There's a hint of a smile on his face as he turns to look at Teru. "Thanks for bringing me here."

Yeah.... Teru's pretty sure he's in love.

--

"Do you like living on your own?" Shigeo asks one day.

Teru eyes him a little warily, but Shigeo's gaze remains fixed on his worksheet as he erases a couple incorrect answers. It's not that he'd never thought Shigeo would ask about it, but he's never brought it up before and Teru's not sure what answer he's looking for. So, he tells Shigeo the same lie he tells himself every day.

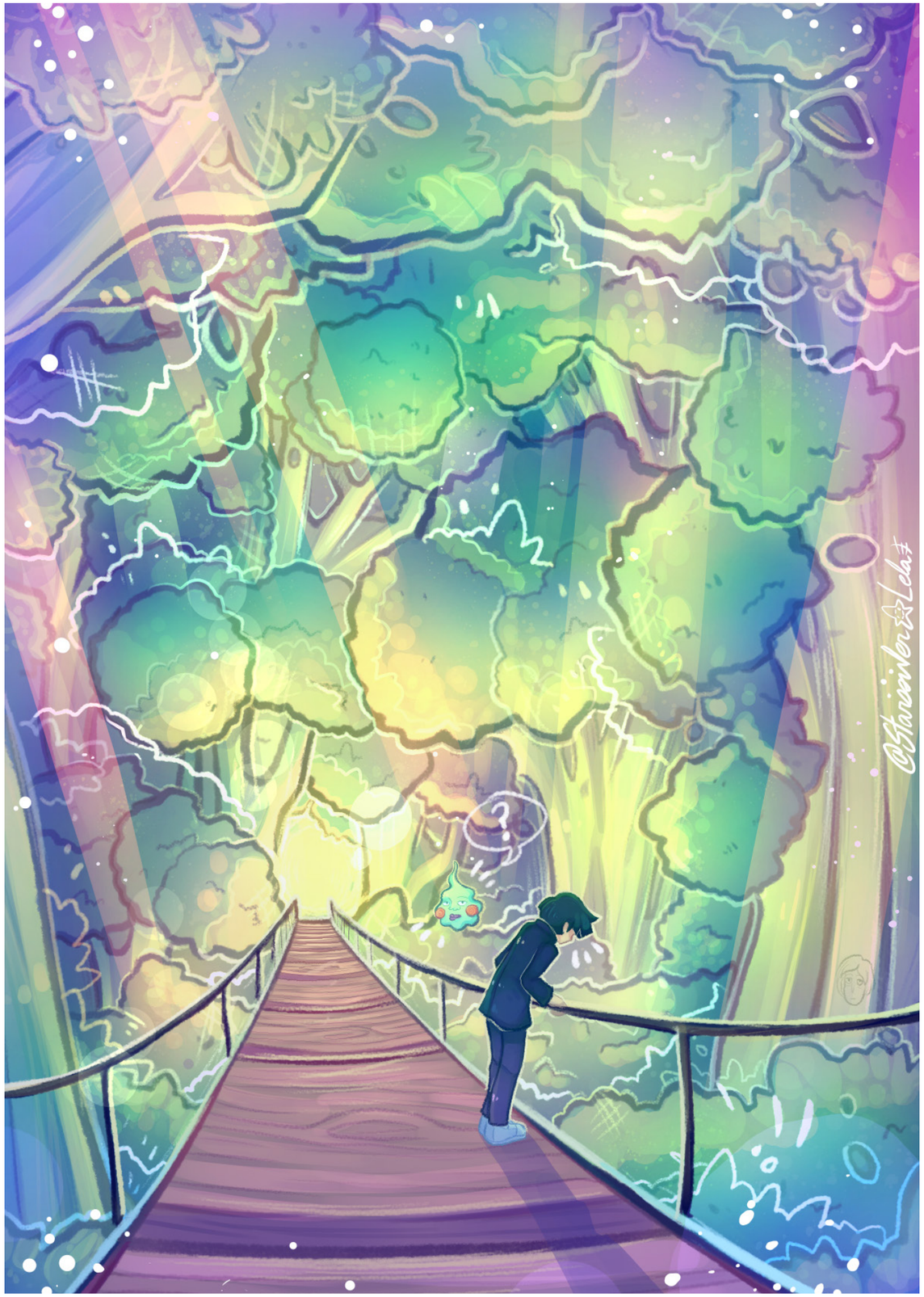
"Of course I do! I can do pretty much anything I want, and my parents send me money every month so I don't have to worry about anything. It's nice."
Shigeo is silent for a few seconds, hand frozen over his paper. "It seems lonely," he murmurs.

Teru freezes, just for a moment, before forcing himself to relax. "It's not that bad. I have a lot of friends I can spend time with. And you."

"You're welcome to come over to my place anytime," Shigeo says. "Hang out with Ritsu and our parents. They'd love to have you over."

"Maybe I'll take you up on it sometime."

And he does. They don't ask him awkward questions and welcome his company with open arms, telling him that he can come by anytime. He eats home-cooked food he didn't make himself for



Lela; *Twitter - @StarsoulerLela*

Refugium

by Aeru; *Tumblr - grandmasterreigen, Ao3 - Aerugonian*

the first time in years. It feels like he has a family again.

Claw launches a full-scale attack on Seasoning City. Almost everyone is evacuated, but the infrastructure of the city is severely crippled, tens of thousands of people left without homes or jobs.

Teru's apartment is one of the ones reduced to little more than crumbling concrete and broken shards of wood.

Claw's ever-present threat in his life is finally gone, but they've managed to take everything from him in the process.He's been left with nothing.

Shigeo finds him the day after the attacks, slumped beneath one of the trees with his knees pulled up to his chest. He thinks he should be surprised Shigeo had even remembered this little place months after he'd shown him, but he's just numb.

There's something timeless about this little pocket of nature, in the way it's stayed whole and unbroken even as half the city is razed to the ground. Dampness seeps slowly through his pants from the dirt, dew lingering into the late morning. There's an earthiness to the air that's hard to find anywhere else, a crisp scent of decomposing leaves and flowers.

Teru closes his eyes and lets his head fall back against the tree to feel the grating sting of the rough bark digging into his skin. Shigeo quietly sits down next to him and touches his fingers to Teru's.

"I don't think they're coming back," Teru admits after several minutes of silence. He tightens his hand around Shigeo's and takes a deep, shaky breath. "My parents, I mean. I'm not sure anymore that they were ever going to. They sent me a text to ask if I was okay - they didn't even bother to call."
Shigeo hums, shifting just a little

Ceren; *Tumblr - dykeyfangs*

Refugium

by Aeru; *Tumblr - grandmasterreigen, Ao3 - Aerugonian*

closer. His pulse beats steadily under Teru's fingers. "It was wrong of them to leave."

This isn't the first time they've had this conversation. Normally Teru feels anger well up inside his chest, an uncontrollable need to defend them even as his own resentment towards them festers, but this time he can't muster anything more than resignation at Shigeo's familiar statement.

"I know," Teru whispers. He's known all along, even if he hasn't been willing to accept it. The words burn in his throat.

"Reigen said I could stay with him for now, t least. But it's not the same."

"No," Shigeo murmurs. "But... I think maybe you can find a family of your own, instead. One that you get to choose yourself. Ritsu, my mom and dad, Reigen, they all care about you. And I do too. I know it's not the same, but maybe we could all be your family instead, if you want."

A breeze stirs up some of the leaves around them, vibrant oranges and reds dancing along the ground of a garden Teru's come to see as more of a home than his physical one. He blinks rapidly, eyes stinging, as he offers Shigeo a tiny smile. "Yeah. That - that would be really nice."

Right now, sitting here with the boy who's quickly become the most important person in Teru's life, things don't seem quite as bleak anymore. For the first time in a long time, he thinks he might eventually be okay.

Lillian; *Instagram - @lilliansketch, Tumblr - lilliansketch*

Nani; *Instagram - @nahrgles.png*